



Department of Justice

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THIRTEEN INDIVIDUALS CHARGED IN TAMPA HOUSING AUTHORITY FRAUD CASE

Tampa, FL - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill today announced the unsealing of two indictments and one information naming three former officials of the Tampa Housing Authority and ten other individuals, all of whom are alleged to have been involved in a conspiracy to steal thousands of dollars designated for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (previously known as "Section 8"), which provides financial assistance to aid low-income families in obtaining a decent place to live. The three former officials of the Tampa Housing Authority that were charged are Calvin Coleman, age 43, Carlton Miles, age 37, and Mario Lovett, age 29, all residents of Tampa. The ten other individuals, described in the indictments as fictitious landlords, include: Koungnum Brown, age 30; Kinta Starling, age 29; William Reeves, age 25; Mary Barker, age 48; Jose Oliver, age 31 years old; Adrian Mosley, age 29; Jonathan Denson, age 37; Jeffery Larkins, age 41; Joenathan Haile, age 39; and Brian Montgomery, age 37. All of the defendants are charged with conspiracy to steal government funds. Most of the defendants are charged with specific instances of theft of government funds. In addition, Coleman and Miles, as former Tampa Housing Authority officials, are charged with the separate public corruption offense of stealing from the Tampa Housing Authority, an agency that receives millions of

dollars in federal funding each year. If convicted, the maximum penalties for the conspiracy charge is a term of imprisonment of five years and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum penalties for the theft and public corruption charges are term of imprisonment of ten years and a fine of \$250,000.

According to the indictments and information, from approximately mid-2004 to mid-2005, Coleman, Miles and Lovett conspired to enter materially false information into the Tampa Housing Authority database in order to fraudulently register the other ten defendants as active landlords and to generate checks authorizing rental subsidy payments to be made to them. Coleman, Miles, and Lovett chose friends and family members as the bogus landlords in order to conceal their fraudulent conduct. The ten fictitious landlords then negotiated the checks and shared the proceeds with Coleman, Miles and Lovett. Numerous fraudulent checks were generated during the course of the scheme, totaling more than \$100,000.

"It is important to investigate and prosecute those who steal funds designed to help people obtain affordable housing. The theft of funds that are there to help the needy is deplorable," stated U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill.

Kenneth M. Donohue, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General stated, "The message here is clear: if you do business with HUD and try to defraud, we're coming after you. We are motivated to do so because like most American taxpayers, we are appalled that some people try to manipulate these programs at the expense of families in need."

The case is being investigated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Cherie L. Krigsman and Thomas Palermo.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.